



The Lighthouse

Smart pays off when handling fuel

by Keith Emmons

I'm sure you all remember the fire we had on pier 15 a while back. Gasoline had leaked into the bilge, and then it exploded while the fuel was being pumped out.

Obviously the best way to avoid these situations is good maintenance and being careful when you're fueling up or taking on water. Make sure you get the right stuff in the right tank. For the safety of all marina tenants and their property, fueling in the marina is restricted to the fuel dock.

In the dockside rules, regulations and procedures listed in your lease, part of #5 states "No vessel is to be fueled in any way in its boat slip nor may fuel be transferred from one tank to another." Fuel may be polished dockside, but no pumping into barrels or tanks for disposal is permitted. Fueling a small outboard for a dinghy is permitted, as long as approved containers are used in quantities of 6 gallons or less.

If gasoline finds its way into your bilge, you have a very dangerous and explosive situation. Any spark, including static electricity could cause your boat to explode. Do not turn any electric switches on or off. Leave the boat immediately and turn off power at the dock post.

You can call 911, or the League City police department at (281) 332-2566. Explain the situation and they will send the fire department out. They will not remediate the fuel in your bilge, but will stand by in case something does happen. Also you can

call the Texas General Land Office at (800) 832-8224. They are responsible for preventing spills into waterways and remediating spills that do occur. If the quantity spilled is more than can be soaked up and removed with some rags or spill absorbents, you'll need to have your boat towed to a shipyard where they can safely remediate the situation.

Happenings

Thursday, September 19 is International Talk Like a Pirate Day. Arrrrrr! Parties and gatherings be all around the area. Visit <http://www.talklikeapirate.com/>

The Ballunar Festival is coming up at NASA / JSC the weekend of September 28-30. Visit <http://www.ballunarfestival.com/> for complete details and and keep your eyes in the

sky that weekend.

Tips and tricks

To renew highly tarnished brass, make a mixture of 1 tablespoon citric acid per cup of warm water. Add a couple of drops of dishwashing liquid as a wetting agent. Soak your brass in this until it turns reddish on the outside. This will rub off easily, and then you can polish up with regular brass polish.

I find 3M's metal restorer and polish works well, as does Flitz and Simichrome polishes. These also work well on other metals. Citric acid is also known as "sour salt" and can be found in the kosher section of your grocery store. You can, of course, buy

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WINTER HOURS

Winter? With temps in the 90s! Believe it or not, we are about to change over to winter hours. As of Saturday, September 7 — Labor Day weekend — the hours will be:

Office: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Noon-4:30 p.m.

Fuel Pier: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Contrary rope

Here is an excerpt from Three Men in a Boat, a very funny book, written by Jerome K. Jerome in 1889, about three bachelors in an English canal boat.

There is something very strange and unaccountable about a tow-line. You roll it up with as much patience and care as you would take to fold up a new pair of trousers, and five minutes afterwards, when you pick it up, it is one ghastly, soul-revolting tangle.

I do not wish to be insulting, but I firmly believe that if you took an average tow-line, and stretched it out straight across the middle of a field, and then turned your back on it for thirty seconds, that, when you looked round again, you would find that it had got itself altogether in a heap in the middle of the field, and had twisted itself up, and tied itself into knots, and lost its two ends, and become all loops; and it would take you a good half-hour, sitting down there on the grass and swearing all the while, to disentangle it again.

That is my opinion of tow-lines in general. Of course, there may be honourable exceptions; I do not say that there are not. There may be tow-lines that are a credit to their profession — conscientious, respectable tow-lines — tow-lines that do not imagine they are crochet-work, and try to knit themselves up into antimacassars the instant they are left to themselves. I say there may be such tow-lines; I sincerely hope there are. But I have not met with them.

This tow-line I had taken in myself just before we had got to the lock. I would not let Harris touch it, because he is careless. I had looped it round slowly and cautiously, and tied it up in the middle, and folded it in two, and laid it down gently at the bottom of the boat. Harris had lifted it up scientifically, and had put it into George's hand. George had taken it firmly, and held it away from him,

and had begun to unravel it as if he were taking the swaddling clothes off a new-born infant; and, before he had unwound a dozen yards, the thing was more like a badly-made door-mat than anything else.

It is always the same, and the same sort of thing always goes on in connection with it. The man on the bank, who is trying to disentangle it, thinks all the fault lies with the man who rolled it up; and when a man up the river thinks a thing, he says it.

"What have you been trying to do with it, make a fishing-net of it? You've made a nice mess you have; why couldn't you wind it up properly, you silly dummy?" he grunts from time to time as he struggles wildly with it, and lays it out flat on the tow-path, and runs round and round it, trying to find the end.

On the other hand, the man who wound it up thinks the whole cause of the muddle rests with the man who is trying to unwind it.

"It was all right when you took it!" he exclaims indignantly. "Why don't you think what you are doing? You go about things in such a slap-dash style. You'd get a scaffolding pole entangled you would!"

And they feel so angry with one another that they would like to hang each other with the thing.

Ten minutes go by, and the first man gives a yell and goes mad, and dances on the rope, and tries to pull it straight by seizing hold of the first piece that comes to his hand and hauling at it. Of course, this only gets it into a tighter tangle than ever. Then the second man climbs out of the boat and comes to help him, and they get in each other's way, and hinder one another. They both get hold of the same bit of line, and pull at it in opposite directions, and wonder where it is caught. In the end, they do get it clear, and then turn round and find that the boat has drifted off, and is making straight for the weir.

The Lighthouse

A monthly publication of South Shore Harbour Marina.



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Published by

Telltales

A Division of Waterfront Publishing Inc.

228-B Marina Bay Dr.

Kemah, Texas 77565

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Always check your anchor rode

by Keith Emmons

Have you inspected your anchor rode lately? Found this on the Internet recently. Of course, if you have an all chain rode, this is one problem you will never have.

I was cleaning/inspecting my ground tackle post trip and came across this section of line that had been partially frayed through. Fortunately, it was pretty far back and I hadn't let out that much line until our last night anchored out during a very windy night (Awendaw Creek, just south of McClellanville).

I found a section of the underside of the anchor platform that had become very rough, and apparently, the line had chaffed almost completely through one strand. Fortunately, the wind dropped during the night and she held on the two remaining strands, or we could have had a rude awakening.

If you're going out and plan on anchoring, you might want to check your line before you go.



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BoatU.S. helps members save money

Like most Americans, boat owners have to watch their budget. Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatU.S.) has nine tips on ways boaters can save this summer. What's the catch? Some require BoatU.S. or BoatU.S. Angler membership, which cost just \$24 annually and includes \$50 of free on the water or on the road towing, 24-hour dispatch, and access to programs and services that make the boating, sailing or fishing experience better. Unless noted, most of the discounts can be found at www.BoatUS.com/serviceslocator.

- At the gas pump: Members can get up to 10 cents off per gallon of fuel at over 360 BoatU.S. cooperating marinas;

- An overnight slip for the vacation: Over 600 cooperating marinas offer up to a 25% discount on transient slip fees — or essentially four nights for the price of three;

- Boat repair discounts: Save a little more at 320 cooperating marinas offering up to 15% off repairs;

- Get a break on guide services or charters: Go fishing with a pro or explore new fishing grounds with the help of a local, with discounts up to 15%;

- The greatest rewards at West Marine: Members get a \$10 reward certificate for every \$250 they spend. It's the highest reward level for any shopper;

- Boat graphics and lettering: Create your custom boat graphics and lettering with our new, easy-to-use website, all from the comfort of home. Members get 10% off and free shipping on orders over \$75 at www.boat-us.com/boatgraphics;

- Borrow a kid's life jacket for the weekend: Borrow the right-sized kids life jacket at over 500 locations through the BoatU.S. Foundation

Kids' Life Jacket Loaner Program.

Find a site near you at www.BoatUS.com/foundation/ljlp;

- For the first mate: The U.S. Power Squadrons have knocked \$30 off the price of their Partner in Command online seminar — now just \$40. The course aims to acquaint the first mate with basic skills he or she may need to fill in for the captain when needed. Through a partnership with the BoatU.S. Foundation, the interactive seminar is available online at www.usps.org/edonline; and

- Sailing on a tall ship: Set sail on three of the largest fully-rigged sailing vessels in the world and enjoy up to 65% off with Star Clippers at www.BoatUS.com/StarClippers.

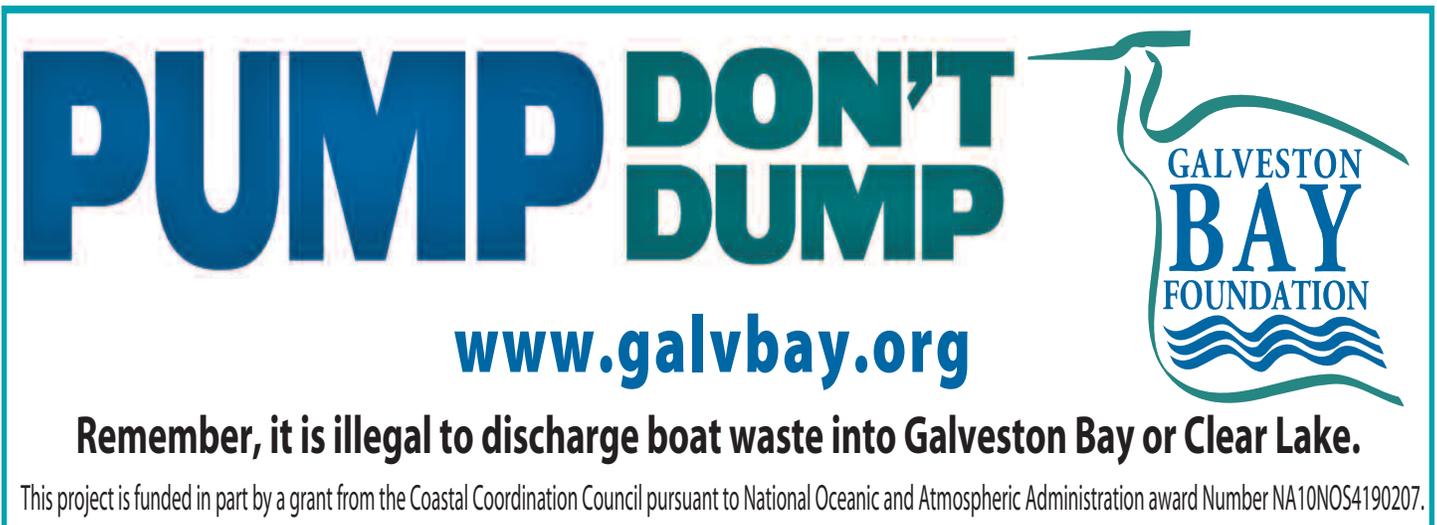
For membership information, go to BoatUS.com/membership or call 1-800-395-2628.



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Remember, it is illegal to discharge boat waste into Galveston Bay or Clear Lake.
This project is funded in part by a grant from the Coastal Coordination Council pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration award Number NA10NOS4190207.

Tips and tricks

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citric acid at most pharmacies, or on the web.

Nevr-Dull is a wadding material impregnated with chemicals that clean metal and leave a slight protective coating behind. I use this to get rid of "ghost rust," that brown discoloration that shows up on your stainless steel after exposure to saltwater. Very easy to use, but won't restore metals as well as the polishes above.

In a pinch, ketchup will polish brass, as will a little salt sprinkled on a lemon wedge.

Salt crystals and dirt will build up on your dock lines. They will actually abrade the rope from the inside, so I wash mine once a year. Since I'm single, I get to use my washing machine

on the gentlest cycle, with regular clothes detergent *and* softener in the rinse. Cold or warm water only, and don't run them through the dryer. Just hang them out to dry.

If you're not allowed in the washing machine room, just get a big bucket of warm water/detergent and let them soak, agitating them awhile. Rinse well and go through the cycle again with conditioner in the water.

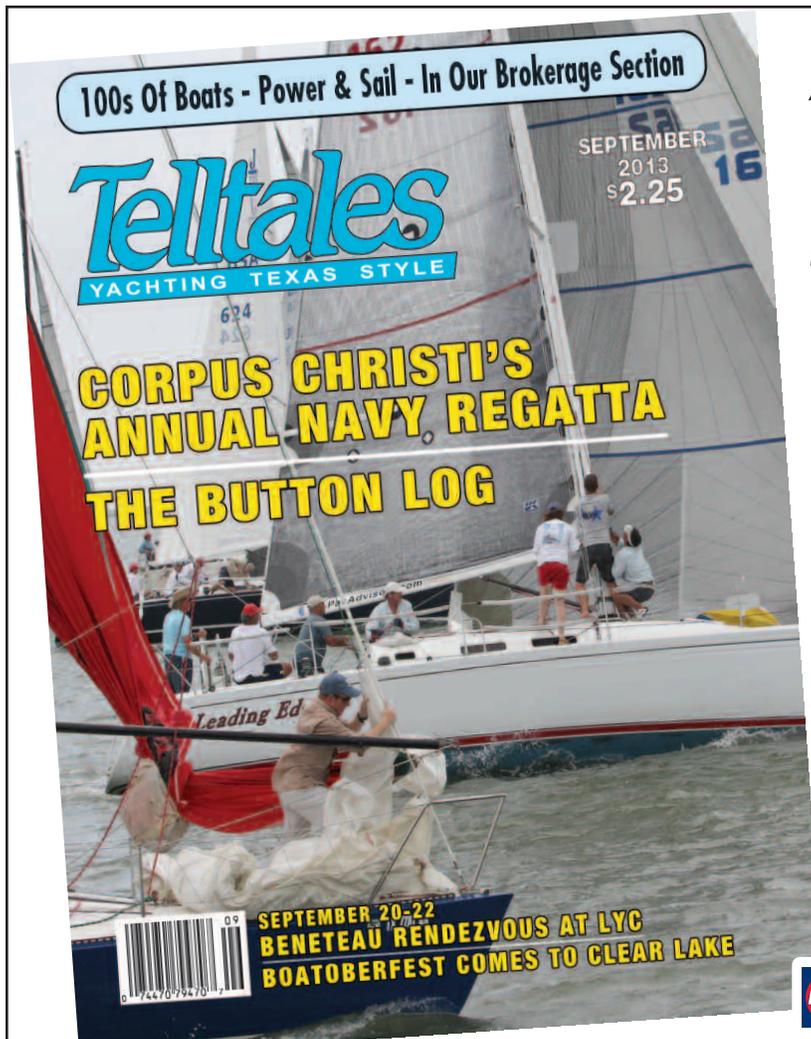
Speaking of dock lines, I usually buy two new ones at the beginning of each hurricane season, and rotate the two worst ones out of the mix. This keeps a good set of lines on the boat at all times. If a hurricane *does* show up, I can pretty much guarantee you won't be able to buy any new dock-lines, as everyone else will have beaten you to it. I find that black lasts longer than any other color, and doesn't show the dirt.

Lemon Pledge works great on that clear vinyl you have on your canvas

enclosures, and is sure a lot cheaper than the marine store stuff. Smells nice too.

A lot of boats sink when the shore water is pressurized, and a line breaks inside the boat. Of course, you should turn the shore water off whenever you leave the boat, but that can get impractical if you're constantly on and off the boat. Pick up a water timer at the hardware store, and attach it at the faucet on the dock, then put your hose on that. Dial in 200-300 gallons, and if something does break, it'll shut the water off for you.

If you use one of those shop lights (caged with a long extension cord) on your boat, be wary of breaking a bulb. Not only does it make a mess, it could energize the cage if it's metal and electrocute you. Pick up a Teflon coated bulb at the hardware store and you won't ever worry about that again. Those are good ideas for other places on the boat as well.



Telltales

YACHTING TEXAS STYLE

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